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RAISED PRINT BOOKS FOR THE BLIND.

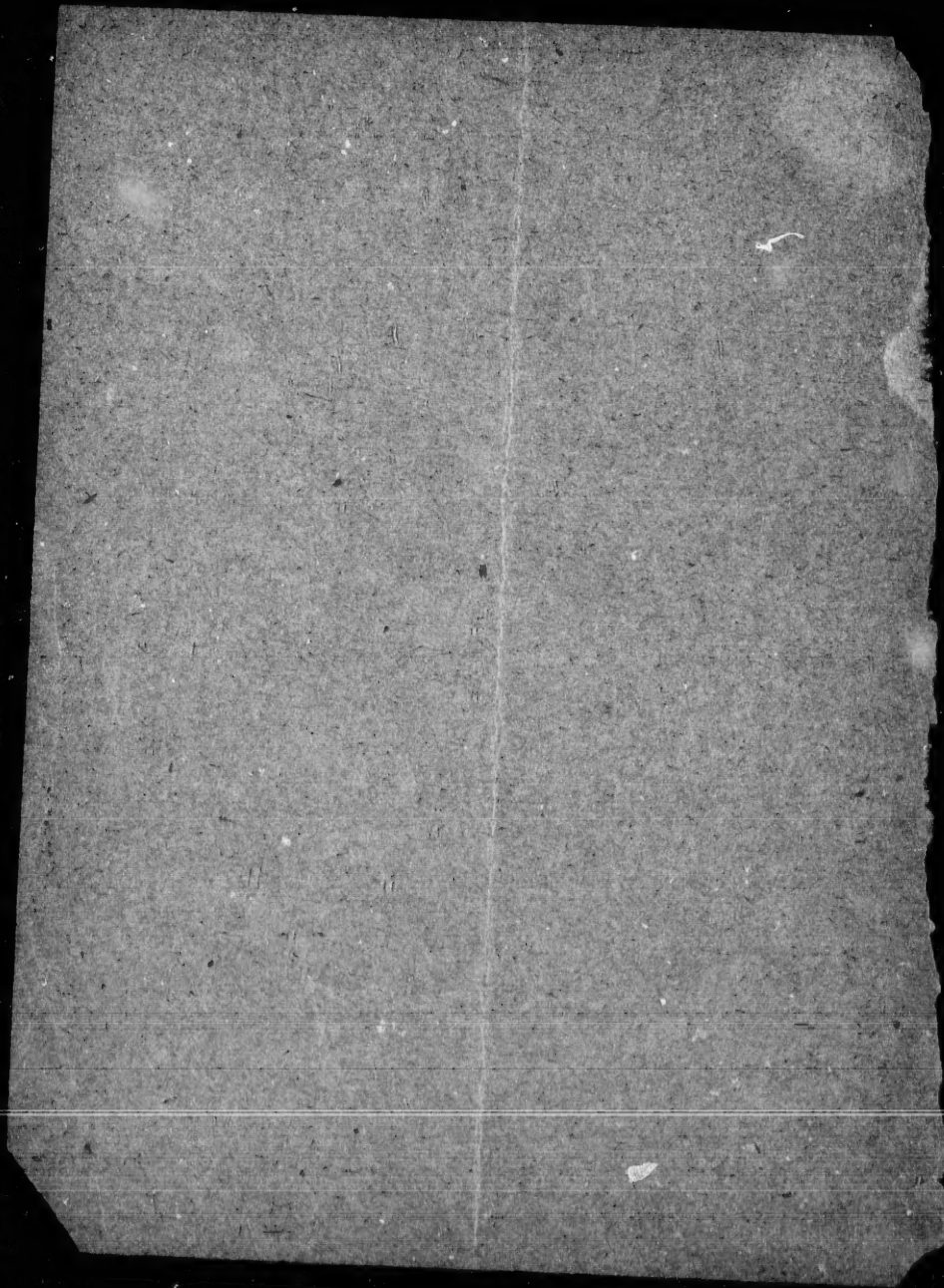
ORIGIN and HISTORY of EMBOSSED PRINTING.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT
THE CIRCULATING LIBRARY

OF THE

School for the Blind,
HALIFAX, N. S.

Halifax Printing Company, 161 Hollis Street.
1895.



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Origin and History of Embossed Printing.

Towards the close of the last century, Valentine Hauey, a French Abbé, employed a little blind boy named Lucius to run on errands and do other light work. The Abbé, according to the custom of the time, used the sand-sprinkler to dry the ink after writing the address on a letter or parcel. Lucius, who was a bright, keen lad, soon learned to distinguish certain of the larger written characters, which, owing to the sand being held by the dry ink, were slightly raised. Hauey watched the boy with great interest, and observing the delicacy of his touch, he conceived the idea that letters might be so embossed upon paper as to be readily distinguished by the finger.

About this time Madame Parados, a famous blind singer, of Austria, came to Paris, and the Abbé, full of his new idea, sought an interview with her. To his great delight he found that Madame Parados was accustomed to represent the music of her most difficult songs with pins placed in a large pin-cushion. Hauey was more than ever convinced that a system of embossed printing

In 1841 Dr. Moon, a blind gentleman, residing in Brighton, England, introduced a system of embossed printing admirably adapted to middle-aged and elderly blind persons. In this system the characters resemble the ordinary Roman letter, but are less complicated and more easily distinguished by the touch.

The quotation—"God is Love"—would be rendered thus :—

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Interesting Facts about the Circulating Library

OF THE

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,

HALIFAX, N. S.

After a careful investigation of the various systems of embossed printing in Europe and America, the School for the Blind at Halifax adopted the systems of Louis Braille and Dr. Moon, and in 1881 the first organized effort was made to establish a circulating library for the blind.

In the Superintendent's Report of the School for 1880 appeared the following:—

“The comparative costliness of raised print books makes it most desirable that a circulating library be established for the use of our graduates, and for any other persons in the Maritime Provinces who have learned to read. The average cost of a book in embossed letters is about \$4.

“Should such a library be organized, one copy of the same work might be read and enjoyed by many individ-

uals; and, unless it be established, many of our graduates will, from want of practice, lose that sensitiveness of touch which as pupils they labored so hard to develop.

"The nucleus of this library has been formed by the British Bible Society. This Society granted the sum of thirty dollars for the purchase of six copies of parts of the New Testament. These have been distributed, in accordance with the wishes of the Society, to persons whose means would not allow of their purchasing such expensive books.

"The eagerness with which these books have been sought after by old persons, as well as by our former pupils, has induced me to supply a few books at my own expense; but I feel that the public are entitled to share with me the pleasure of establishing a complete library for circulation among the blind of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and I therefore earnestly solicit contributions of either money or books towards this most desirable object."

In 1881 the Superintendent says in his report:—

CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

"The efforts to establish a circulating library of raised print books have, we are pleased to say, been successful. In this report we have acknowledged the sum of \$435.00 as having been contributed towards this most desirable object, and I beg to tender my sincere

thanks to those who have so cheerfully aided in the furtherance of this benevolent scheme.

"Four hundred dollars of the amount contributed will be funded and the interest spent each year in the purchase of new books. The balance, with all subsequent receipts, will be applied at once to the purchase of suitable books, so that the circulating library may be immediately put in operation."

Again, in 1882, the Superintendent says:—

"The circulating library of raised print books is now in full operation, and already fifteen persons outside of the institution have been taught to read by the sense of touch. The inestimable blessing of this library to the blind can only be fully appreciated when we consider the condition of those who lose their sight whilst yet in the prime of life. Suddenly plunged as it were into a new and unknown world in which their whole previous training unfits them to dwell, they become despondent and sink into a state of the most pitiable and abject helplessness. Fancy then what it would be for such persons to have access to a library of religious and instructive books, printed in a system which they might easily learn to read. The very effort of learning to read, and the pleasant occupation thus afforded would tend to draw the mind from the gloomy contemplation of such a deprivation. In more than one instance I have known it to be the means of rousing persons from despondency,

and stimulating them to such new employment suited to their altered circumstances.

"In addition to the donations acknowledged in last report, I have the pleasure of acknowledging the sum of fifty dollars, received from Miss M. Palmer, Charlottetown, P. E. I., being the proceeds of a concert organized by her in aid of the library fund. Miss Palmer and her willing co-workers have our sincere thanks for the practical assistance they have extended to us. We trust other young ladies will follow the example thus set them, and aid us in furthering this work.

"Subscriptions of four dollars each have been received from Miss E. Ellisden and Miss H. Clayton, both of Halifax. Our sincere thanks are due to Sir Charles Lowther, Bart., England, for a handsome contribution of eighty-three books printed in Moon system."

In 1894 the Superintendent writes :—

BOOKS AND BOOK-MAKING.

"Books are like eyes to the blind ; they paint in words many grand pictures which stir the imagination and quicken the appreciation of the world without. To learn from 'these monuments of vanished minds' the great truths of nature is a constant joy and delight to one deprived of sight. To be read to aloud by teachers or friends, or to read for themselves from the books in our library, is one of the greatest pleasures that our pupils

have open to them. The avidity with which our library books are read is proved by a reference to the Library Record, which shows that in the past twelve months 71 persons have drawn from the library 843 books printed in Braille Point or in Dr. Moon's characters.

"It has been our aim to both increase the size of the library and at the same time place upon its shelves a number of books suited to the taste and age of young blind children. This has been accomplished by a number of ladies, who have together formed a Library League for the purpose of dictating and having written out by the graduates such books as have been selected. Ladies resident in other places in which our graduates are living have become associated with the League, and during the year twenty volumes of very attractive reading have been added to our catalogue. The ladies willingly give their time to the dictation of these books, and the graduates receive a remuneration for their labor. And thus the subscriptions towards the 'Library Fund' serve a double purpose. They enable us to increase our library, and at the same time enable some of our graduates to turn their skill in punctography to profitable account."

We have now in our Circulating Library 325 vols. printed in the Braille and Moon systems; but while we are thankful for what has already been accomplished, we earnestly desire to add many other books to the Library. Some of the volumes upon our shelves have been presented to the Library by the friends of the Blind, and

could the public once fully appreciate how thoroughly these books are enjoyed by our pupils, graduates and other blind persons, who have been taught to read through the agency of our travelling home-teacher, it is certain that a large increase would be made in the number of books.

We desire to add to the Library many entertaining, instructive and religious works, and any individual or society wishing to help us can do so by undertaking to defray the cost of writing out and binding any books which they may select. The average cost per volume is about \$4.00, and some idea of the expense incurred in maintaining this Library may be gathered from the fact that a single copy of the Bible, which is stereotyped, and therefore may be purchased for less than many other books, costs \$25.00. During the past year we have added to our Library many books for young people, such as "Black Beauty" and "Alice in Wonderland," etc., several religious books presented by His Grace Archbishop O'Brien for the special use of Roman Catholic pupils and graduates, and a number of choice biographical works, the gift of the Committee in charge of the Armitage Memorial, London, G. B.

All subscriptions or donations of books will be gratefully received and thankfully acknowledged by

C. F. FRASER,
Superintendent.